

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES - 18 OCTOBER 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Briefings for the Australian Greens and Independents – 2011-12

Question reference number: HS 121

Senator: Boyce

Type of question: Written question

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 December 2012

Number of pages:

Question:

- a) Were any briefings provided to the Australian Greens in 2011-12? If yes, please include:
 - 1) How are briefings requests commissioned?
 - 2) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
 - 3) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provided details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
 - 4) How long was spent undertaken briefings for the Australian Greens? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
- b) Were any briefings provided to Independents in 2011-12? If yes, please include:
 - 1) How are briefings requests commissioned?
 - 2) What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
 - 3) Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provided details of what the briefings were and why it could not proceed.
 - 4) How long was spent undertaken briefings for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.

Answer:

- a) Yes.
 - 1) A meeting with Senator Di Natale was arranged with the Department by the office of the Minister for Human Services.
 - 2) A face-to-face briefing was provided to Senator Di Natale on 14 March 2012. The briefing related to the Chronic disease dental Scheme. No documents were provided.
 - 3) No.
 - 4) One hour: 2 x SES Band 3; 1 x SES Band 2.

b) Yes. Verbal briefings were provided to the offices of Mr Tony Windsor MP (Independent Member for New England), the Hon Peter Slipper MP (Independent Member for Fisher), Mr Rob Oakeshott MP (Independent Member for Lyne) and Mr Craig Thomson MP (Independent Member for Dobell). Briefings took place with staff and not directly with the Member of Parliament.

1) Briefing requests can come from Members, while at other times the Department instigates contact with local Members to discuss new initiatives.

2) Briefings undertaken to the offices of Independents were as follows:

i. On 27 February 2012, the office of Mr Windsor was verbally briefed on the co-location and move to electronic payments for Inverell Centrelink and Medicare Service Centres.

ii. In late May 2012, the office of Mr Slipper was briefed on the co-location of both Kawana Waters and Caloundra Medicare and Centrelink Service Centres.

iii. On 4 June 2012, the office of Mr Windsor was verbally briefed on the co-location and the move to electronic payments for the Armidale Centrelink and Medicare Service Centres.

iv. On 14 June 2012, the office of Mr Oakeshott was verbally briefed on the co-location of Port Macquarie Centrelink and Medicare Service Centres and the move to electronic payments for both Port Macquarie and Taree.

v. On 20 June 2012, the office of Mr Thomson was verbally briefed on the move to electronic payments.

3) No briefings were unable to proceed.

4) Details of the briefings:

i. The two briefings to the Office of Mr Windsor were provided by an APS 6, Service Centre Manager. Both briefings took approximately 30 minutes.

ii. The briefing to the office of Mr Oakeshott was provided by an EL2 Region Manager and an EL1 Service Centre Support Manager. The approximate time spent was 20 minutes.

iii. The briefing to the office of Mr Thomson was provided by an EL1 Service Centre Support Manager, accompanied by an APS5 Manager delivering Medicare Services. The briefing took ten minutes.